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Redevelopment Board Minutes 03/19/2007

Arlington Redevelopment Board
 Minutes of March 19, 2007

Members Present: Roland E. Chaput
 Andrew P. West
 Bruce Fitzsimmons
 Edward T. M. Tsoi
 Chris Loret

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien
 David Berry
 Laura Wiener
 Joey Glushko

Roland Chaput called the meeting to order at 7:10 and announced the public hearing regarding warrant articles for this year's Town Meeting that propose to amend the Zoning Bylaw. Mr. Chaput pointed out that the numbers of the warrant articles had changed since the advertisement was placed in the newspaper and that Town Counsel had assured him that it was immaterial to the content of the ad which clearly indicated the changes being proposed. Mr. Chaput polled the audience to see which articles they wanted to discuss and decided on that basis to consider Warrant Article 5 concerning the parking of so called zip cars. Ed Starr testified in favor of the article, John Worden asked what specific language the Board was considering. Kevin O'Brien read the proposed language.

Chris Loret asked about the need to establish this use within public parking lots and there was some support for placing such cars in the Russell Common parking lot. He also asked about the need to place signs or advertising on the cars. Dan Curtin from the Zipcar company indicated that people need to be able to identify the cars and that they need not put other advertising on them.

Roland Chaput next asked for comments on Article 9 concerning affordable housing. John Griffin of the Affordable Housing Task Force, sponsor of the article, commented that they looked at inclusionary zoning across the commonwealth and that the proposed changes would make housing available to more people in Arlington and that lowering the price of rental housing to that which can be afforded by people earning 60% of median income would make the cost of the housing more different than the current market rate. Chris Loret asked if lowering the rate would encourage a developer to create a 40B project instead. Respondents thought it would not. Pat Worden said she thought the proposed change would benefit more Arlington families, indicating that now only 219 affordable units were for families while there were 821 for seniors. David Levy of the Arlington Housing Corporation expressed his support and provided written testimony.

Roland Chaput asked for comment on the remaining articles. There being none, the Board recessed to move to the second floor conference room in the Town Hall Annex.

Roland Chaput introduced Jake Upton from Symmes Redevelopment Associates to present the 100% plans for the residential portion of the Symmes project. Chris Loret asked about approval of the 100% plans for the Townhome E's when the Board has not seen or approved the plans at the 50% stage. Kevin O'Brien explained that it was to everyone's advantage to present the plans for review at the 50% stage because problems were easier to fix at that stage. If the Board felt the plans needed to be changed at the 100% stage it would be more difficult for the developer, but if the Board approved the plans, then it is approving the plans at the 100% stage.

Ed Tsoi asked Jake Upton to explain any outstanding issues with the appellants. Jake Upton explained that he felt the plans complied with the settlement agreement, the appellants had said that the elevations in the agreement that showed five levels of housing were labeled "four stories" meant that the plans did not agree with the settlement agreement.

Jake asked Ed Bradford of The Architectural Team to present the drawings. Ed Bradford showed the Board drawings which were developed in the review of the 50% plans to show how the 100% plans compared. Andy West and Ed Tsoi had questions about the roof louver material and indicated that they wanted to see it against the roofing material as part of the mock-up of materials that will be constructed on the site. Ed Bradford noted that on some elevation drawings such as A4.03, item no. 2 should say "clapboard", not "shingle".

Joe Curro asked that the Symmes Neighborhood Advisory Committee be given a schedule showing the phasing of construction. Paul Morrison asked about the sign which Jake Upton explained was reduced in size by 25%. Paul Morrison then mentioned that there was a gap in the landscaping next to his house between the work done on Summer St. and the Symmes property. Jake Upton said that would fill the gap to make it look nice.

Chris Loret asked to have the Townhome E's presented which was done by Ed Bradford.

Ed Tsoi moved that the Board approve the Symmes residential plans at the 100% level noting the change from shingle to clapboard and the materials mock-up that needs to be constructed on site. Chris Loret seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 in favor.

The Board then reviewed minutes from previous meetings. Ed Tsoi moved approval of the minutes of February 26, 2007, Chris Loret seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 in favor.
 Ed Tsoi moved approval of the minutes of March 1, 2007, Andrew West seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 in favor (Bruce Fitzsimmons refrained from voting because he was not present at the March 1 meeting.)
 Ed Tsoi moved approval of the minutes of March 5 as amended by Roland Chaput, Roland Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 in favor.

The Board then briefly discussed the warrant articles and instructed staff to include information about membership in the definition of a shared vehicle and to further limit the weight of the vehicle and prohibit non accessory signs on the vehicles.

The Board adjourned at 10:05.

Respectfully submitted,
 Kevin J. O'Brien